

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR

SUBJECT: SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: (A) PARIS 20929 (NOTAL), (B) PARIS 20115 (NOTAL),
(C) MOSCOW 11449 (NOTAL), (D) MOSCOW 11512 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: BASED ON FRENCH PRESS COMMENTS AND FIRST QUAI BRIEFING WE HAVE IMPRESSION SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT TO MOSCOW JULY 15-16 TO EXCHANGE LETTERS ESTABLISHING NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD HAS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED AMBIGUOUS ATMOSPHERE IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS. KEY SUBJECTS WERE TERRORISM, THE MIDDLE EAST, FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY AND BILATERAL ISSUES. QUAI SAYS IT "CANNOT SAY" WHETHER BREZHNEV VISIT WAS DISCUSSED. END SUMMARY.

2. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS BEAUCHATAUD CONFIRMED THAT LE MONDE ACCOUNTS (JULY 17 AND 18-19) CONSTITUTE FAIRLY ACCURATE REFLECTION OF ATMOSPHERE AND THEMES OF SAUVAGNARGUES BRIEF MOSCOW VISIT. OFFICIAL TONE WAS CLEARLY CORDIAL. MOREOVER SAUVAGNARGUES WAS FAVORABLY STRUCK BY FACT THAT BREZHNEV, PODGORNYY AND KOSYGIN TURNED UP FOR EXCHANGE OF LETTERS CONSTITUTING NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS AGREEMENT, WHICH TENDED TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE THE SOVIETS ATTACH TO IT AS A FIRST STEP IN FRANCO-SOVIET DISARMAMENT DIALOGUE. (LE MONDE, IN WIDELY NOTED EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "PARIS-MOSCOW, OR THE SUSPICIOUS FRIENDSHIP," SPECULATES THAT SOVIET OBJECT IS TO WORK TOWARD A FRANCO-SOVIET "PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR" AGREEMENT, ALONG LINES OF 1973 US-SOVIET TEXT, TO BEGIN TO CIRCUMSCRIBE THE FREEDOM OF ACTION OF THE FRENCH DETERRENT.)

3. AT SAME TIME BEAUCHATAUD NOTED OTHER ASPECTS OF VISIT SUGGESTING THAT SOVIET AMBIVALENCE VIS-A-VIS GISCARD'S FRANCE HAS NOT BEEN DISSIPATED. SOVIET PRESS CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUE OF THE GENERAL MERY STATEMENT, CONTINUES UNABATED. MOREOVER THERE WAS THE TONE AND CONTENT OF GROMYKO'S LUNCHEON REMARKS, DURING CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH HE SAID: "WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS TO CONSERVE THE POLITICAL CAPITAL ACCUMULATED IN FRENCH-SOVIET COOPERATION DURING NUMEROUS YEARS OF CONSTANT WORK BY BOTH SIDES." LATER HE ASKED MORE POINTEDLY: "WHAT IS NECESSARY TO RAISE OUR RELATIONS TO A HIGHER LEVEL? THE SPIRIT OF THE (CSCE) FOLLOW-UP. ANY ZIG-ZAG, ANY DEVIATION FROM THE POLICY LINE DEVELOPED IN OUR MUTUAL RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, SHOULD BE

EXCLUDED. . . . IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS WILL DEPEND ON THE ACTIONS OF THE TWO SIDES." LE MONDE'S FRONT-PAGE COMMENT ALREADY CITED CONCLUDES THAT THIS STATEMENT, MADE AFTER GROMYKO'S CONVERSATION WITH SAUVAGNARGUES, SHOWS THAT GROMYKO HAD NOT BEEN CONVINCED BY THE LATTER'S ASSURANCES THAT FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED. AS LE MONDE PUT IT: "FOR THE KREMLIN THE DEEPENING OF THE FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IS NO LONGER A CERTAINTY: IT IS A WISH . . ." AT QUAI, BEAUCHATAUD SAID LE MONDE'S COMMENT (AS WELL AS FIGARO'S SIMILAR ANALYSIS) WERE TOO ACID. HOWEVER HE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT THEY WERE INCORRECT. IN MAKING STATE POLICY MOSCOW NOW HAS TO TAKE PCF INTO ACCOUNT.

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4. BEAUCHATAUD'S BRIEFING, BASED ON STILL INCOMPLETE
RECORD OF TALKS, SUGGESTED FOLLOWING MAIN THEMES WERE
DISCUSSED IN TETE-A-TETE AND PLENARY DISCUSSION WITH
GROMYKO:

(A) FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY: RESPONDING TO GROMYKO'S
QUESTIONS WHETHER GENERAL MERY'S ARTICLE REPRESENTED
CHANGE IN FRENCH POLICY, SAUVAGNARGUES ELABORATED
CONTINUITY OF FRENCH DEFENSE POSITION, WHICH RESTS
ON THREE ELEMENTS: FRANCE'S DETERRENT FORCE; THE
MAINTENANCE OF FRANCE'S INDEPENDENCE IN DEVELOPING
ITS MILITARY AND DEFENSE POLICY; AND ITS MEMBERSHIP
IN THE NATO ALLIANCE. GROMYKO APPARENTLY LISTENED
TO SAUVAGNARGUES' EXTENDED EXPLANATION THAT NONE OF
THESE ELEMENTS HAVE CHANGED, BUT THEN NEVERTHELESS
MADE THE ALREADY-CITED REMARKS AT LUNCH CAUTIONING
FRENCH AGAINST "ZIG-ZAGS" AND "DEVIATIONS", COMMENTS
THE QUAI CLEARLY DID NOT APPRECIATE.

(B) TERRORISM: WE HAVE IMPRESSION, BOTH FROM
BEAUCHATAUD CONVERSATION AND LE MONDE REPORT, THAT
IT WAS SAUVAGNARGUES AND NOT GROMYKO WHO RAISED TER-
RORISM ISSUE, TO EXPLORE SOVIET REACTION TO POSSIBIL-
ITY THAT TERRORISM MAY BE TAKEN UP (BY FRG?) AT UN.
CLOSELY PARALLELING MOSCOW'S REF C, BEAUCHATAUD SAID
THAT GROMYKO "SEEMED PREPARED TO CONDEMN TERRORISM,"
BUT ADDED THAT, IF ISSUE WERE SUBMITTED TO INTERNA-
TIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IT WILL AGAIN BE OPPOSED BY

"YOU KNOW WHO." (BEAUCHATAUD WOULD NOT SPECULATE WHOM GROMYKO MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND, BUT DID NOT THINK IT WAS U.S.) ACCORDING HIS ACCOUNT, GROMYKO THEN LAUNCHED INTO THEME THAT TERRORISM PROBLEM HAD TO BE DEALT WITH AT ITS ROOTS; THAT IS, IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HOWEVER, BEAUCHATAUD SAID HE DID NOT EXPLAIN HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE. CONVERSATION REPORTEDLY REACHED NO CLEAR CONCLUSION.

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(C) MIDDLE EAST: BEAUCHATAUD'S ACCOUNT WAS IDENTICAL TO, ALTHOUGH NOT AS DETAILED AS FRENCH AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE'S BRIEFING, REPORTED MOSCOW'S REF D.

(D) NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: ACCORDING TO LE MONDE THERE WAS ALSO DISCUSSION OF NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, IN WHICH SAUVAGNARGUES APPARENTLY EXPLAINED FRENCH POSITIONS, ALTHOUGH QUAI DID NOT MENTION THIS.

(E) BILATERAL ISSUES: BEAUCHATAUD INDICATED THAT BILATERAL PARTS OF DISCUSSION DEALT PRIMARILY WITH FRENCH DESIRE FOR AN ACCORD PROVIDING FOR IMPROVED TREATMENT FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF FRENCH TECHNICAL PERSONNEL WORKING IN THE USSR, WHICH WOULD ALSO HAVE BEARING ON SOVIET COMPLIANCE UNDER CSCE BASKET II. FOR THEIR PART SOVIETS WANT FRENCH TO ACCELERATE ISSUANCE OF VISAS, BY AGREEING TO ISSUE VARIOUS TYPES OF OFFICIAL VISAS IN SPECIFIED (AND SHORT) TIME PERIODS. (FRENCH WELCOME THIS SOVIET

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INTEREST IN RECIPROCAL SPEED-UP IN ISSUANCE OF VISAS.
HOWEVER FIXED TIME LIMITS PROPOSED BY SOVIETS HAVE
SO FAR CAUSED PROBLEMS FOR FRENCH SECURITY SERVICES
WHO NEED MORE TIME IN CERTAIN SENSITIVE CASES.)
BEAUCHATAUD SAID PROGRESS WAS MADE UNDER BOTH HEAD-
INGS BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

5. ON MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE OF POSSIBLE BREZHNEV VISIT
TO FRANCE, BEAUCHATAUD DECLINED ALL COMMENT, BUT GAVE US

DISTINCT IMPRESSION QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED.

6. COMMENT: INFORMATION AVAILABLE SO FAR SUGGESTS SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT HAS NOT ELIMINATED THE INCREASINGLY NOTICEABLE AMBIGUITIES IN FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS (REFS A AND B). SOVIETS SEEM TO HAVE APPLIED JUDICIOUS MIX OF HIGH-LEVEL CORDIALITY AND BARBS TO UNDERSCORE (A) IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO DRAWING FRANCE DEEPER INTO A BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT RELATIONSHIP WHILE, (B) CONTINUING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH GISCARD'S ATLANTICISM AND DEFENSE POLICIES. HOWEVER, UNTIL WE FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PROGRESS WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MADE ON QUESTION BREZHNEV VISIT (OR OTHER NEW HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH FRENCH) THIS YEAR WE WOULD DEFER A MORE PRECISE JUDGMENT ON SAUVAGNARGUES' TRIP.
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